

## PATAKI'S TUNNEL VISION

RECONSTRUCTION FATCATS SPREAD SWEETHEART DEALS  
WITH 9.11 RECOVERY MONEY, CALDWELL ON PAGE 4

W E L C O M E T O

# THE FOURTH WORLD WAR

Even to seasoned observers of the Middle East the attack was “barbaric,” “horrific,” and evidence of “savage behavior” and “satanic wrath.” Was the discussion about Israel’s assassination of the wheelchair-bound Sheik Ahmad Yassin, dismembered by missiles as he exited a mosque? No. The vitriol was directed at Iraqi civilians who mutilated the bodies of four American mercenaries killed by insurgents in the town of Falluja.

BY A.K. GUPTA



The contrasting reactions in the Western media, generally approving of one illegal occupier killing a religious figure versus unleashing an extreme verbal barrage to decry four dead soldiers of fortune protecting another illegal occupation, highlights the growing clash of civilizations.

After September 11 commentators rushed to deny that the attacks signified a war between cultures and religions. And they were right, at least then. Grand historical conflicts don’t start overnight; they are a step-by-step descent into the abyss that one is only aware of when the last light of reason is extinguished.

With diverging worldviews one side’s atrocity becomes the other’s justice, fueling the cycle of conflict.

The killing of Yassin was endorsed initially by the Bush administration. Many Western diplomats, while decrying the assassination, strained for balance, taking pains to condemn Hamas as a “terrorist organization,” citing “Israel’s

paramount needs to defend itself” and calling on “all sides” to prevent further escalation.

The corporate media were not so equivocal, with many using the euphemism “targeted killing,” glossing over the seven bodyguards and civilians killed and 17 others injured, all worshipers, in the strike. So much for targeted.

Throughout the Muslim and Arab world there was genuine anguish and days of protest over what was seen as the murder of a venerated spiritual leader. Arab satellite networks carried the funeral live from start to finish. Commentators noted that the murder of Yassin would convince millions of Muslims for a generation that there can be no peace with Israel. Many saw a U.S. hand behind the assassination, confirming to them that the “war on terror” is really a war on Islam.

The aftershocks were strongest in Iraq as protesters linked Yassin’s killing to their own occupation. In Najaf protesters chanted, “Death to Israel, death to America!” In Mosul Iraqis pledged, “Do not worry, Palestine. Iraq will avenge the assassination of Sheikh Yassin.” At the Umm al-Tubul mosque in Baghdad a Sunni Sheikh said, “The Jews who killed Sheikh Yassin in Palestine are the same group who are killing Iraqis.”

If this isn’t disturbing enough to the U.S. occupiers, the debacle in Falluja began with a general strike in the town on March 23 in response to Yassin’s death a day earlier.

Middle East analyst Juan Cole argues that, “The fighting in Falluja that took so many lives Friday [March 26] appears to have begun with Sunni insurgents doing operations in memory of Yassin.”

Cole is referring to repeated incursions by U.S. Marines





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### WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for The Independent, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR APRIL

### Thursday, April 8

6 pm - Free  
*B-Boy & B-Girl Break Dancing, Popping, Locking and Uprocking Classes* Learn from old and new school instructors;  
I.S. 93, 66-56 Forest Ave., Ridgewood: Space is limited, call: (718) 456-KIDS

6 pm - \$10  
*Not That There's Anything Wrong With That: The History of Gay & Lesbian Images on TV* With this comprehensive series, the MTR chronicles the rise of queer images into the mainstream over the last 40 years, and there's nothing wrong with that! Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W 52nd St. 212.621.6800

7pm - \$5 to play, Free to watch  
*Get Your Fight On* Street Fighter II video game tournament broadcast on big screen. Advance get a free shot and winner takes half the pot; accompanying DJ and art show; Brooklyn Underground, 88 Front St., DUMBO 718.935.0560

### Friday, April 9

6:30 pm - \$5/\$3 children  
*Film screening, Berkeley in the '60's* Learn about the "era of protests" at Berkeley that spawned a social revolution. Q & A with Berkeley alumni from the 60's; NYU Cantor Film Center, 36 E. 8th St. (btw. Greene & University Pl.) www.cafnewyork.org

### Sunday, April 11

5 pm - Free  
*Bike Bloc: RNC Event Planning* New ideas and eager volunteers welcome to plan full week of events during the RNC; 49 E. Houston (btw. Mott & Mulberry), www.times-up.org

### Monday, April 12

11pm - \$10  
*"How to Get Stupid White Men Out of Office" Book Release Party* Featuring performances by Pete Miser, L Maestro Presents & DJ Jeannie; Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. www.publictheater.org

### Tuesday, April 13

7-9 pm - Free  
*Fix Your Own Damn Clothes* Workshop to learn how to mend clothes. Bring your torn and raggedy favorites, buttons, patches, needles and thread;

RSVP: Activethoughtproject-@blazemail.com, or (718) 926-7306; ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St. www.abcnorio.org

### Wednesday, April 14

6:45-9 pm - Free  
*"Democracy Denied: Taxation Without Representation" Release the Vote Campaign Launch* If you work, pay taxes and don't think you can vote, join us! Testimonials and panel discussion featuring Prof. Manning Marable of the Africana Criminal Justice Project & others; Columbia Univ., 501 Schermerhorn Hall, 116th St. & Broadway

7:30 pm - \$6/8/10 suggested  
*Lights Out! Privatization & Deregulation of Electricity* Critique of the energy bill and discussion on how deregulation and privatization have played a major role in creating a chaotic and expensive system of delivering electricity. Featuring Nomi Prins, Giordan Raacke and Rene Toback; Brecht Forum, 122 W. 27th St., 10th Floor; www.brechtforum.org

### Thursday, April 15

7 pm - \$5  
*Benefit Party for Alter Magazine* Screenings of the films, *Scenes from an Endless War* and *White Balance*. Bluestockings Bookstore, 172 Allen St. www.bluestockings.com

8 pm  
*Books Through Bars Bingo Night* \$1 per card. Prizes include autographed copies of *The Soft Cage*, *Lockdown America*, and *Paradise Alley*; Pam Grier Movies; sex books; \$100 gift certificate to Book Value; membership to Bluestockings Books and more; ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St., www.abcnorio.org

*B-Boy & B-Girl Break Dancing, Popping, Locking and Uprocking*  
— Thursday, 4/8

2-6 pm, 4/16 10am - 5pm, 4/17 10am - 4pm - Free  
*Creative Destruction: Area Knowledge and the New Geographies of Empire* War and an expanding American empire are redrawing international boundaries, changing the shape of the world as we know it. What effect does current scholarship have on our understanding of new geographies and what new models of area knowledge are emerging within cultural, social and geographic theory?; CUNY Graduate Center, 365 5th Ave. at 34th St.: To register: (212) 817-8215 or continuined@gc.cuny.edu.

### Friday, April 16

6:30 pm  
*Amnesty International USA's Stop Violence Against Women Campaign* Mark your calendars for a NYC event featuring Nebahat Akkoc, a Kurdish activist and women's human rights defender. Location and details TBA: For info contact Zaynab Nawaz, znawaz-@aiousa.org, (212) 633-4292

7pm, \$15/\$10 students  
*"Everything You Know is Wrong," An evening with The Disinformation Company* Including a screening of exclusive clips from the infamous "banned" Disinformation TV series and discussion on the role of coercion in advertising and public relations; To register: (212) 817-8215 or continuined@gc.cuny.edu.

7 pm - \$5 suggested  
*Gender Binary 201: Gender, Freedom and Capitalism with Tara Jensen and Ace McAleton* Using a brief history of

gay liberation struggles, feminist ideology and queer theory to examine how notions of identity yield models of social change. Ace and Tara will discuss how activists think about and understand gender, sex, and sexuality; Bluestockings Bookstore, 172 Allen St. www.bluestockings.com

### Monday, April 19

7-9 pm - Donation optional  
*Public Speaking Workshop* Public speaking is a critical skill for activists. No preparation is needed; 139 Fulton St., Suite 215; www.greenspeakers.org

### Tuesday, April 20

7:30 pm - \$5 suggested  
*Box the Pony, by Scott Rankin & Leah Purcell (Goa-Gungari-Wakka Wakka)* Leah Purcell's critically acclaimed one-woman show about growing up in a champion boxing family on the outskirts of an Aboriginal Mission. Part of the New Indigenous Voices from Australia series;

New Group Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St., (212) 533-0889

### Wednesday, April 21

7-9 pm  
*Money, Power & Taboo: Getting Over It to Work for Change* Fundraising is an important, but frequently ignored, aspect of organizing. Discuss practical techniques and common misperceptions activists have toward money and fundraising. If coming with a particular group, please bring budget/financial info: RSVP to Activethoughtproject-@blazemail.com or (718) 926-7306, ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St. www.abcnorio.org

6-9 pm  
*Home Maintenance Repair Course* DIY carpentry, basic plumbing, use of power tools, electric & more; Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush, Brooklyn; For more info call (718) 469-4679, or email tyrone\_mcdonald@nhsnyc.org

## YOU MIGHT BE WONDERING: WHAT'S THAT NAKED, HAIRY ASS DOING ON THE BACK COVER?

Long-time readers will also notice that we've gone four-color. The two changes are related. We're committed to never standing still, to constantly improving *The Independent*. We started as a four-page paper in September of 2000 with limited distribution and an infrequent publishing schedule. We're now a 16-page biweekly with a growing circulation that reaches hundreds of venues and events throughout the city and region.

Innumerable volunteer hours have gone into building this project during the past three years; that and tens of thousands of dollars. Almost all our funds are spent on printing, mailing and distribution costs.

With the Republican National Convention just months away we have a unique opportunity to reach hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. But we need your support.

Agreeing to take full page ads on the back cover was a difficult decision for the collective. We feel we have a unique relationship of trust with our readers because we are truly independent. Our goals are to continue increasing our circulation and distribution, improving our content and design while maintaining our close relationship with grassroots movements.

We have also spun off *El Independiente* as a separate publication for 2 million Spanish-speaking New Yorkers. But it all takes money (just ask our printer and landlord). To continue expanding, we need as many revenue sources as possible so we are not dependent on any single source. We have raised our funds through grants, fundraisers, merchandise, donations, advertising and subscriptions.

We're a free paper, but hundreds of people subscribe and contribute regularly to help keep us that way. Every \$50 donation means another 500 copies of *The Independent* get into the hands of the public.

So subscribe today, send us a contribution or just give us a call to help with distribution or the hundreds of little tasks it takes to keep Indymedia moving forward.

— *The Independent*



THIS IS WHAT PLUTOCRACY LOOKS LIKE! The Billionaires "counter" protest at the March 20 protest against the war in Iraq.

# BILLIONAIRES FOR BUSH

## 'FOR TOO LONG WE'VE RULED THE WORLD FROM BEHIND CLOSED LIMOSINE DOORS'

By CHRISTIAN ROSELUND

At the March 20 anti-war protest in Manhattan the crowd was thick at the corner of 34th St. and 6th Ave. Marchers carrying large signs made their way through metal barricades that police were beginning to set up. Amid all of this, about 40 people decked out in suits and ties, evening gowns and rhinestone tiaras displayed signs reading, "Casualties are Just Formalities" and "Blood for Oil."

They were not well-dressed counter-protesters, but Billionaires for Bush, a street theater group that lampoons the power and big money behind George W. Bush.

At a recent Tuesday night meeting in the Billionaires' lower Manhattan office, more than 50 people packed the room, half of them in costume. They included graphic artists, actors, computer industry and public relations employees, and one filmmaker/trapeze artist.

"I'm amazed at the amount of energy people are willing to share - they believe our message," said Pam Perd, the PR director for Billionaires.

Hal E. Burton, a self-described "policy wonk," said, "the goal is to decide what our most effective [ideas] are and get them out into the public discourse." Burton explained that the purpose of Billionaires is "to expose the capture of the government by corporations. We're focusing on investment and return."

The Billionaires website states, "Bush's media team has managed to construct him as a folksy everyday guy whose tax cuts are good for all Americans. It is this image that the Billionaires campaign is aiming to upend."

And the message is getting out.

Stunts such as having a Karl Rove impersonator, who fooled both press and bystanders, arrive in a limo and schmooze with the group at a recent Bush fundraiser in Chelsea have caught the media's eye. So far this year, Billionaires has produced television commercials and radio spots, and has been covered by "CBS Evening News," NPR, the Yale Daily News and three separate times by The New York Times.

In character, the Billionaires pretend this is normal: "Whose media? Our Media!," they chant.

But beyond the fun of \$100-bill ties and fake cigars is serious strategy. At the meeting a color-coded map of swing states was passed out. Billionaires has not only developed chapters in Democratic strongholds such as New York, Boston and Los Angeles, but in the key battleground states of Michigan and Oregon. Currently, there are 35 chapters in 19 states and the District of Columbia, and three overseas.

Billionaires is the brainchild of activist, author and prankster Andrew Boyd a.k.a., Phil T. Rich. He says the

seeds were planted in 1997 while he was working for United for a Fair Economy, a group of left-leaning economists that publishes Dollars & Sense.

He had the idea to sabotage a stunt being held by Republicans on the ship of the Boston Tea Party fame. Their plan was to dump a box symbolizing the tax code off the deck of the historic ship, but enterprising activists paddled up in a "working families life raft" in the middle of the event. In the end, the box thrown overboard sunk the raft, and the media had a field day. It was not the kind of press the Republicans wanted.

After other media stunts, Billionaires for Bush and Gore was launched on April 15, 2000, to highlight the special interests behind the two major presidential candidates. Their symbol was the image of a tycoon similar to the one on the Monopoly board game.

The result was street theater that made people laugh and drove a message home. "For too long we have ruled the world from behind closed limousine doors," Boyd declared in 2000. That year, Billionaires marched alongside protestors in Los Angeles, Boston and a dozen other cities, blossoming into two dozen chapters. At the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia that summer about a hundred faux billionaires were in attendance.

Political theater in public spaces dates back to the Ancient Greeks, but enjoyed a revival in the sixties with groups such as the Diggers, the SNCC Freedom Singers, the Living Theater, San Francisco Mime Troupe, and Bread and Puppet Theater. The Situationists, started in 1957 by European artists, staged interruptions in the "spectacle" of modern society and came to international prominence during the 1968 student rebellion in France. In the eighties, ACT UP, the radical AIDS-activist group, successfully used tactics such as "die-ins," where hundreds pretended to be dead and had to be hauled off by the police, to dramatize their message.

One change for the Billionaires is that they are not targeting the Democratic Party this election. Clifford Tazner, (a.k.a. Felonious Ax), who is the Billionaires' musical director, explained, "We're still big leftists. A lot of us aren't thrilled with John Kerry... Bush is just so bad."

"The American public is extremely dissatisfied with the policies Bush has put into effect, and the way the world has changed so rapidly in the national and international arenas," added Perd.

Naturally, Billionaires is gearing up for the Republican National Convention in New York this summer. In August, they will hold a Million Billionaire March, which they promise will be a gala event not to be missed. As the Billionaire's motto goes, "We're all in this together. Sort of."

# RNC WATCH .org

For the past three months, The Independent has been running an online news blog, rncwatch.org, tracking news related to the Republican National Convention. Below are some recent highlights:

### 1,000 a day keeps the people away...

The city has warned that there may be mass arrests in connection with the Republican National Convention. Perhaps it is part of the city's strategy to get more federal funding, but the New York Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Constitutional Rights are concerned. The issue made headlines when Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau warned that the NYPD is preparing to arrest up to 1,000 people per day before and during the RNC. CCR's Legal Director, Jeffrey Fogel, wrote to Morgenthau:

"What we have seen in our city is a police department that believes that certain people or groups, i.e. the Republican Party, have greater free speech rights than the city's own residents. The police department simply does not seem to understand that it has the responsibility to uphold and ensure the free speech rights of those protesting on an equal footing with those inside the convention."

The city is reporting that 1,000 groups have already filed applications seeking permits to protest during the RNC.

### Nine Reasons for New Yorkers to protest the RNC

At a recent town hall forum on the Republican National Convention, longtime New York Assemblyman, Ed Sullivan, outlined how the Bush agenda is adversely affecting New Yorkers. Sullivan said the Bush Administration has:

1. Cut section 8 housing
2. Imposed term limits on public housing
3. Spent tens of billions on Iraq that could be spent on urban development
4. Limited funding for the No Child Left Behind Act
5. Prevented Pell Grants for college students from keeping pace with inflation
6. Given tax cuts to the wealthy that could have gone to social services
7. Cut lead abatement programs
8. Passed, and continues to support, the Patriot Act, which has a particularly adverse effect on immigrant communities
9. Destroyed the dignity of organized labor, in part by outsourcing jobs overseas.

### Camping permits rejected

The city has rejected a permit to allow for 20,000 protesters to sleep in the East River and Tompkins Square parks. Former members of the Yippies, who played a central role in the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, made the request.

### Summer Calendar of Events

RNCNotWelcome.org has posted a detailed timeline of events of the major Republican National Convention-related events scheduled for this summer:

**Summer-Long:** Democracy Summer. "100 days of democracy in action." **July 26-29** Democratic National Convention meets in Boston, Mass. **August 20-22** Life After Capitalism Conference. **August 23-27** Bushville Tent City and Homeless Encampment. **August 25-27** Food Not Bombs World Gathering. **August 27** Critical Mass Bike Ride, New York City. **August 29** Republican national convention is scheduled to begin, Madison Square Garden. **August 29** United for Peace & Justice calls for worldwide march. **August 30** Poor People's March, sponsored by the Still We Rise Coalition and the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. **September 2** Bush scheduled to receive Republican re-nomination. **September 2** United for Peace & Justice protest called. **September 4** RNC ends.

### Websites for more information on the RNC:

rncwatch.org, counterconvention.org, rncnotwelcome.org, unitedforpeace.org & rncpunditpatrol.typepad.com.



# LIBERTY FOR SOME

By JOHN TARLETON and LEIGH ANN CALDWELL

The federal government made available \$8 billion in tax-exempt "Liberty Bonds" to the city and the state after September 11. The Liberty Bonds are an attractive tax shelter for well-to-do investors and also enable developers to receive low-cost financing for their projects.

\$6.4 billion in Liberty Bonds has been set aside for commercial real estate projects like the Bank of America Building at 1 Bryant Pl., which will be financed with \$650 million in tax free bonds. The other \$1.6 billion in Liberty Bonds has been allocated for residential use. Ordinarily, 20 per cent of residential bonds must be used to build moderate income housing units. But the Federal government waived that restriction. Now, 5% of Liberty Bonds must be used on affordable to moderate income housing with rents being set at 150% of the Area Median Income, or about \$94,000/year for a family of four. The rest of the residential Liberty Bonds are being used to build "market-rate" housing in Lower Manhattan with rents ranging from \$3,000 (one bedroom) to \$6,000 (three bedroom). Here are some of the residential projects that have already been approved:

**\$200 million:**  
Rockrose Development, 2 Gold St.

**\$175 million:**  
Rockrose Development, Pearl St.

**\$132.5 million:**  
Nathan Berman and Yaron Bruckner, 63 Wall St.

**\$110 million:**  
Albanese Development, N. End Ave. btw Murray & Warren

**\$110 million:**  
Related Companies, Battery Park City, North Site, 19 B

**\$107.9 million:**  
Related Companies, Tribeca Green Housing Project, Battery Park City

**\$100 million:**  
Albanese Development, 20 River Terrace, Battery Park City

**\$101 million:**  
Brac Realty Capital, 90 West St.

**\$98 million:**  
Lalezarian Developers, 100 Maiden Lane

**\$95 million:**  
Leonard Litwin, 10 Liberty St.

# PATAKI'S TUNNEL VISION

By LEIGH ANN CALDWELL

John Zuccotti has pined for years for a high-speed train that would connect Lower Manhattan to the Long Island Rail Road and JFK Airport.

And now Zuccotti, president of the Real Estate Board of New York, chairman of Brookfield Financial Properties, the largest commercial real estate firm in Lower Manhattan and advisor to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), is on the verge of receiving \$1.2 billion in post-September 11 aid to bring a train tunnel right to his doorstep.

The LMDC is expected to release its final proposal in April. The plans for the train end at the new PATH station on Church St. It will have direct access to the World Financial Center, in which Brookfield has a controlling interest. Easy commuter access to the property will likely increase its demand and value.

"It would make Lower Manhattan a good alternative to Midtown," says Melissa Coley, Brookfield's Vice President of Investor Relations and Communications. "It would give direct access to whole new labor pool. People from Long Island could get to Lower Manhattan quickly and efficiently as well providing access to JFK."

The JFK connector will cost an estimated \$2 billion to \$5 billion.

"We are completely opposed to using [September 11 aid] to building a tunnel to JFK because community needs revolve around housing and jobs," says Bettina Damiani, Project Director of Good Jobs New York, which monitors the use of taxpayer dollars to ensure efficient government spending.

Where Does the Money Come From? Following the destruction of the World Trade Center, the federal government allocated more than \$20 billion in aid to New York City. New York State received \$2.7 billion in the form of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money, of which \$1.2 billion remains unspent. (Another \$8 billion in Liberty Bonds were also provided—see sidebar) The CDBG money acts as cash. The allocation and distribution of these dollars result in immediate expenditure.

Block grant money is issued through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and must be approved by the department. According to the HUD website, at least 70 percent of the funds are supposed to be allocated for community development through affordable housing and economic stimulus programs that "benefit low- and moderate-income persons over a one-, two-, or three-year time period selected by the state."

David Dyssegard Kallick, senior fellow at the Fiscal Policy Institute and coordinator of the Labor Community Advocacy Network, says block grant money is usually very restrictive in its uses. But Congress lifted the restrictions in approving the rebuilding aid.

**The Governor's Plan**

On Feb. 19, Gov. George Pataki presented various plans to spend the remaining \$1.2 billion on the connector train. (See sidebar on how some of the first \$1.5 billion was spent.)

A new underground rail link into Lower Manhattan must travel under the East River. This leaves two options: using an existing tunnel or building a new tunnel. (See map for tunnel options.)

Damiani says the high-speed train represents the "constant trumping of city dwellers to suburbanites." The new train would provide a convenient ride to JFK and cater to commuters from Long Island. If an existing tunnel were used, it would disrupt subway service, says Damiani, noting that the A, C, M, N, and R subway lines would be affected.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation—the 12-member board set up by Gov. Pataki to redevelop Lower Manhattan—the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Port Authority, the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), and the City of New York are studying four proposed train routes. Negotiations are taking place to decide a route, a cost estimate, and a financing plan. It will also determine the amount of block grant money that will be used to fund the project.

### High-Speed Train Support

Gov. Pataki is the leading public advocate for the train project. He sits at a nexus of influential players that have the power and money to move the tunnel plan forward.

The governor oversees the four agencies that are negotiating the use of block grant



PHOTO: Fred Askew

money for the JFK connector. The LMDC was created as a bi-partisan council to oversee and guide the rebuilding efforts of Lower Manhattan, but critics say it is just an extension of the Governor. Besides appointing six of the twelve board members, he has considerable sway over the six board members appointed by Mayors Bloomberg and Giuliani.

"The governor has control of the votes," Kallick says.

Zuccotti is one of several downtown real estate moguls pushing for the tunnel project. He sits on the LMDC's Development Advisory Council, which advises the board on economic development and planning. He presides over the Real Estate Board of New York, which donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to Pataki and other leading state Republicans from 1999 to 2002.

Zuccotti is joined on the Development Advisory Council by Jack Rudin of Rudin Management, which owns 14 office buildings and 7.5 million square feet of office space in New York, half of which is located downtown. Since 1999, Rudin and his brother Lewis have invested \$215,000 in state politicians, the majority of that also going to Republicans.

Carl Weisbrod, former president of the New York City Economic Development Corporation and president of the Alliance for Downtown New York, is one of six LMDC board members appointed by Pataki. The Alliance for Downtown, the City's largest Business Improvement District, oversees all

economic growth and planning for all of Lower Manhattan below Chamber Street.

"He [Pataki] is catering dramatically to the real estate industry," says Damiani of Good Jobs New York. "The real estate industry are the ones pushing for the tunnel and they are winning the battle on most of the money being spent."

Pataki spokesperson Lynn Rasick says "the Governor believes that both short term and long term development of Lower Manhattan is essential" to the economic prosperity of the area. She confirmed that the LMDC, the Port Authority, the transportation authority, the City of New York, and the ESDC are currently involved in negotiations on the use of block grant money for an airport connector.

Pasquale DiFulco, spokesman for the Port Authority says, "there is no question that the Port Authority supports the rail link to JFK. Connecting passengers to area airports is a priority of ours." DiFulco says the new Air Train, which connects the A train to JFK, averaged 5,700 paid riders per day during March. 83 million people flew into JFK last year.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has said little about the rail link. Last year he released his "Vision for Lower Manhattan." It received praise from community groups and advocates. The plan included job creation and housing programs, and improving subway service in Lower Manhattan. The Mayor's spokesperson Jennifer Faulk says he is deeply involved in block grant negotiations. She said the mayor believes the funds could be used in better ways than a LIRR/JFK connector train.

### Community Opposition

"September 11 meant the American flag in the right hand and the American dollar in the left. From the LMDC, all we hear about is the needs of the real estate developers," says Victor Papa of Immigrant Social Services.

Papa's opinion echoes throughout Lower Manhattan neighborhoods. Residents of the Lower East Side and Chinatown say Lower Manhattan needs jobs and housing, not a rail link to the airport.

More than 270,000 workers in New York lost their jobs following September 11, according to the Labor Community Advocacy

## ALTERNATE PROPOSALS TO THE JFK AIRPORT CONNECTOR

By LEIGH ANN CALDWELL & JOHN TARLETON

What else could you do with \$1.2 billion in community development block grants besides building a connector tunnel to JFK for the well-to-do businessmen who work in Lower Manhattan? Lots say community advocates. Everything from creating thousands of new public sector jobs to giving public housing residents a chance to buy their own homes to helping launch worker-owned businesses.

### "Liberty Jobs"

The Labor Community Advocacy Network would use the remaining CDBG money to put people back to work through the public service sector. LCAN would focus on providing community services for residents of the community. In turn, it would create and estimate 60,000 new jobs. For example, building parks and recreation centers would benefit the community and put people to work.

In addition, it would give money to local organizations and non-profits to extend their services to the community. For example, extending language services and job training would create jobs at the organization and provide services to people who can then join the work force.

The Liberty Jobs Proposal is endorsed by sixty labor unions, non-profits, community groups, arts, groups and urban planning organizations.

### Tenement Empowerment Act

The Tenement Association backs a proposal by Lower East Side Council Member Alan

Network. The Lower East Side and Chinatown were particularly hard hit with Chinatown losing 25 percent of its jobs.

The residents of these neighborhoods have different plans but similar ideas on ways to spend the block grant money. At a March 16 public forum, the Civic Alliance provided residents an opportunity to choose how they'd like to spend the remaining \$1.2 billion of the block grant money. In the survey, 37 percent of participants selected affordable housing, and 23 percent wanted economic development, including job creation programs. Six percent put their money on the JFK rail link.

Barbara Capparale of the Good Ole Lower

East Side, stresses the urgency of job creation and housing. She and her peers have lost jobs since September 11 and cannot afford to pay their rent. "It's like a big ecosystem, people want to work where they live. If they are displaced, their whole support group breaks apart," says Capparelle.

Bin Lang of the Chinese Workers and Staff Association also wants housing and job subsidies. She puts the blame directly on Gov. Pataki. "He is ignoring our needs," Lang says. (See sidebar about alternative proposals to the JFK rail link tunnel.)

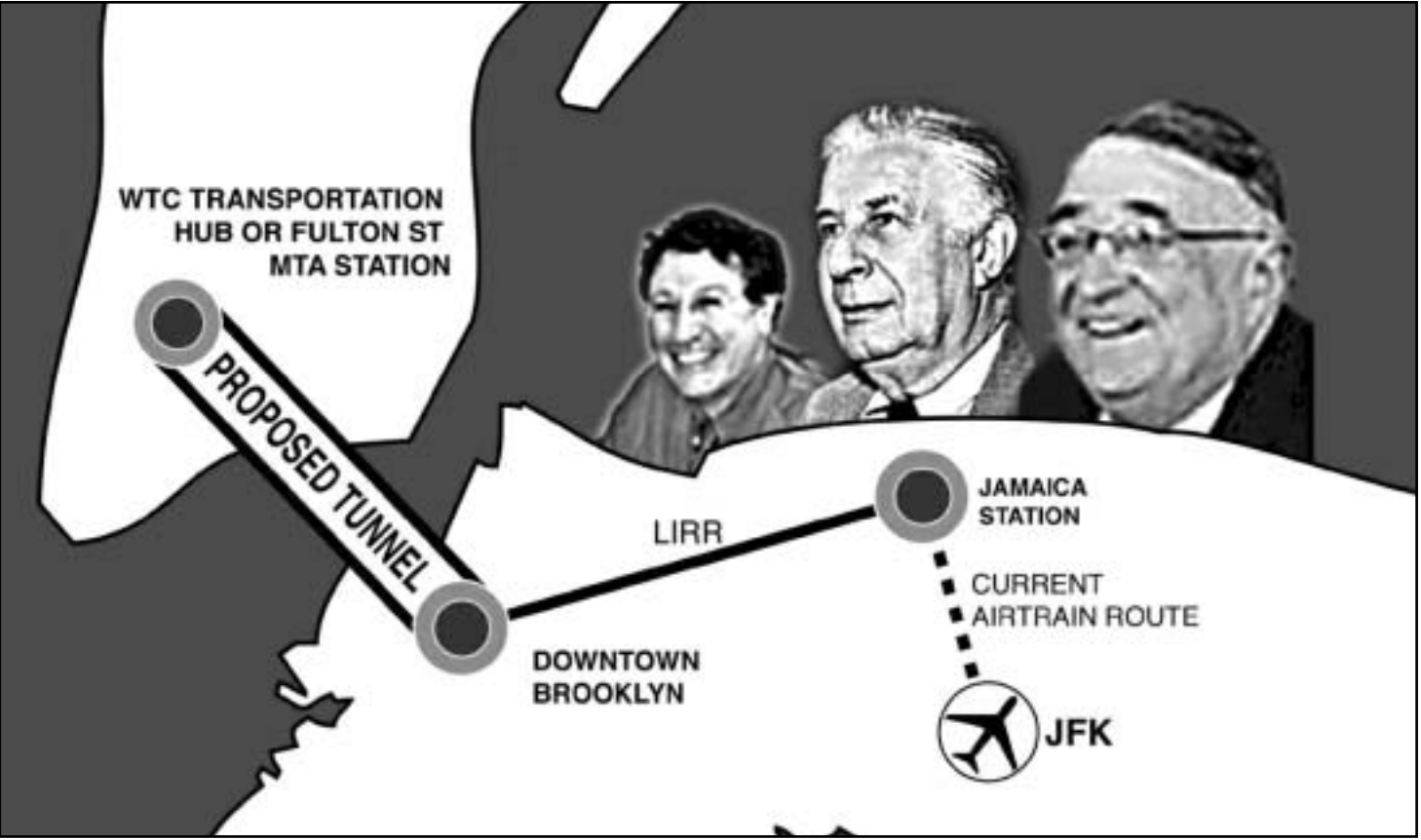
Kallick says the use of the block grant money is not supporting an economy of peo-

ple "who live and work in the city. Rather, it is promoting the alternative, an economy relying on a few industries being financed by people who come in from the suburbs."

What chance do the opponents have?

Following the release of the final proposal of the JFK rail link, the LMDC is expected to create a Partial Action Plan. A two-week public comment period will follow.

Kallick is cautious about the residents influence on the proposal. "There is an obligation for the LMDC to answer comments, but there is no obligation for them to follow them."



**TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN** From left to right: Carl Weisbrod, president of the Alliance for Downtown New York; Jack Rudin of Rudin Management; and John Zuccotti, President of the Real Estate Board of New York look to use up to \$1.2 billion in post-911 community development funds to build a tunnel for a high speed connector train to JFK.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

By JOHN TARLETON

If the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation approves spending Community Development Block Grant money on a multi-billion dollar connector tunnel to JFK Airport, it won't be the first time that moneyed interests have raided the Community Development Block Grants that were established following the September 11 attacks. Here are some of the big name beneficiaries:

- Bank of New York: \$40 million to move to a new tower in downtown Brooklyn. The project also received \$113.9 in low interest liberty bonds.
- New York Board of Trade: \$23.3 million
- New York Mercantile Exchange: \$5 million
- RR Donnelly: \$4.2 million
- Oppenheimer: \$4.2 million
- Commerzbank: \$3.7 million
- Fimilac: \$1.28 million



INDYMEDIA  
IN BRIEF

Indymedia is a network of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate news coverage. The following reports are a sample of recent stories posted to local Indymedia websites. New York's local affiliate is at [nyc.indymedia.org](http://nyc.indymedia.org)

TIMONEY 3 ACQUITTED ON ALL CHARGES FROM LAST RNC

Camilo Vivieros, Darby Landy and Eric Steinberg were acquitted April 6 of all charges of attacking former Philadelphia police chief John Timoney during protests at the 2000 Republican National Convention. More than 400 protesters were arrested during the Philadelphia convention, the majority while demonstrating against the prison-industrial complex.

PORTLAND POLICE SHOOTING

On March 28, James Perez was shot and killed by Portland Police Officer Jason Sery. The shooting occurred after police stopped Perez for failing to use a turn signal. Police admit that Sery shot Perez three times in the chest less than a minute after pulling him over. No weapon was found on Perez's body or in his car. This shooting is the second time in 10 months that Portland Police have killed an unarmed African-American. Portland Mayor Vera Katz called for a public inquest into Sunday's shooting.

ARIZONA: CORONADO SNARED

The only things captured in a hunt for mountain lions in Tucson's Sabino Canyon were Earth First! activist Rod Coronado and *Esquire* journalist John H. Richardson. The two were caught disabling a leg-snare trap placed by the Arizona Game and Fish department in hopes of snagging a mountain lion. Due to public protests and political pressure, the department decided to instead attempt to tranquilize the cats and transport them out of the area.

CAROLINA WOMEN MARCH ON

Women's rights activists traveled North Carolina State raising awareness for the April 25 March for Women's Lives. They spoke of the need to confront the Bush administration's anti-women policies, and to encourage women to stand up for their rights. Paige Johnson of Planned Parenthood of Central NC argued that pro-choice groups prevent more abortions than conservative groups by providing access to birth control.

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SIERRA CLUB ELECTIONS

ENVIRO CLASH OVER IMMIGRATION

By F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

Proto-fascists," "McCarthyites running a smear campaign," "flat-out liars," and "reactionary zealots." This is a sample of the mud being slung as the April 21 election deadline approaches for board of directors at the Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental organization.

At the center of controversy is a group of activists who favor a shift in Sierra Club policy to restrict immigration to the U.S. Opponents are vocal in their insistence that three anti-immigration activists joined the election race in a deliberate attempt to take over the Sierra Club.

SEEDS OF CONFLICT

Environmentalists are often at odds over immigration. While many view an anti-immigration policy as racist and unrelated to environmental protection issues, others see population pressures at the root of growing consumption levels that contribute to environmental degradation. That second view sometimes weds normally liberal-leaning environmental activists with political conservatives – a fact illustrated by right-wing support for the three anti-immigration Sierra Club candidates.

The candidates at the heart of the immigration battle include former Democratic Governor of Colorado Richard Lamm, former Congressional Black Caucus executive director Frank Morris and Cornell University professor of ecology David Pimentel. The three are endorsed by a faction of the Club known as SUSPS, or Support U.S. Population Stabilization, which emphasizes the issue of overpopulation in the United States.

Sierra Club members vote for the board of directors in an open election each year. Democratic elections at such a high level are rare among large environmental organizations. While the process allows everyone to participate it also leaves the board vulnerable for takeover – particularly given that on average only 10 percent of Club members actually cast ballots.

The debate has caused major disputes within the Sierra Club. In 1996, after decades of supporting immigration restrictions, the Club decided to shift its focus and support family planning in the developing world. SUSPS members ran a campaign to reverse the new policy in 1998, but were defeated by a margin of 60 percent to 40 percent, at which time the Club officially decided to take no position on the subject.

The issue remained on the back burner until



SOME ADVOCATES of immigration restriction cite the threat of new arrivals to the USA's long tradition of moderation and careful stewardship of our natural resources.

last October when Mark Potok, editor of the Southern Poverty Law Center's *Intelligence Report*, sent a letter to Club president, Larry Fahn. In it, Potok warned that racist anti-immigration activists were threatening to stage a coup within the Sierra Club leadership by encouraging "opponents of immigration to join the Club by early next year, in time to vote."

The warning prompted 11 former Sierra Club presidents to write a letter to the board of directors calling on them to protect the organization from a takeover. It also marked the beginning of a campaign to discredit the three insurgent candidates; a campaign that some say has gone too far.

A DELIBERATE RESPONSE

In response to the apparent insurgency a group of Sierra Club members formed Groundswell, an advocacy group committed to fighting the anti-immigration takeover.

In recent weeks Groundswell spent over \$100,000 and used staff resources when it sent some 700,000 flyers to Sierra Club members. The literature urged members to back five Groundswell-endorsed "candidates who will put their loyalty to the Sierra Club over their personal agendas."

Critics point out that candidates are supposed to have a \$2,000 spending limit and that the Groundswell campaign has given unfair publicity to establishment candidates while ignoring others, regardless of their stance on the immigration issue.

Adding to the confusion, three dummy candidates are included on the ballot, whose only purpose is to call on voters to cast votes "against those candidates backed by SUSPS."

"They've allowed three candidates who aren't even running to have ballot statements," says Marcia Hanscom, a current board director. "The club allowed them to have 350-400 words to talk about other candidates and say don't vote for them – that's very unfair to the other candidates."

At least one candidate is leading the way in using litigation to halt the election through the courts.

"We have a lawsuit pending," says Robert Roy van de Hoek, a Dutch-immigrant candidate who has the backing of SUSPS, but who insists he's neutral on the immigration debate. "We're trying to stop the announcement of who won and have the election done over again."

TANGLED ALLIANCES

The board of directors' elections ballot includes 17 names – eight are listed as nominating committee candidates, meaning they have been hand-picked by directors to run for office. The others are "petition" candidates who were required to receive dozens of signatures before getting their names on the ballot. A nomination designee is often perceived as having the blessing of the Club's establishment, while petition candidates see themselves as closer to the organization's grassroots.

While some candidates and their supporters who are neither part of the Groundswell five nor SUSPS endorsees complain that the immigration debate has taken attention away from other, more important issues, others say it's critical to remain focused on defeating the insurgent anti-immigration candidates.

"These folks are not Sierra Club activists – they have no Sierra Club experience," says Chad Hanson, a nominated candidate who nonetheless is widely respected by grassroots members. "The by-laws are set up to protect our organization from a genuine takeover effort, which is exactly what this is."

Others are more blunt in their disapproval. "There's a real problem when you have groups of proto-fascist xenophobes led by Richard Lamm trying to get on the board," says Michael Dorsey, who like Hanson is a nominated candidate, but not part of the five endorsed by Groundswell. "The whole immigration debate is hurting the environmental movement overall. A lot has to do with racists like Lamm coming in and pimping these issues."

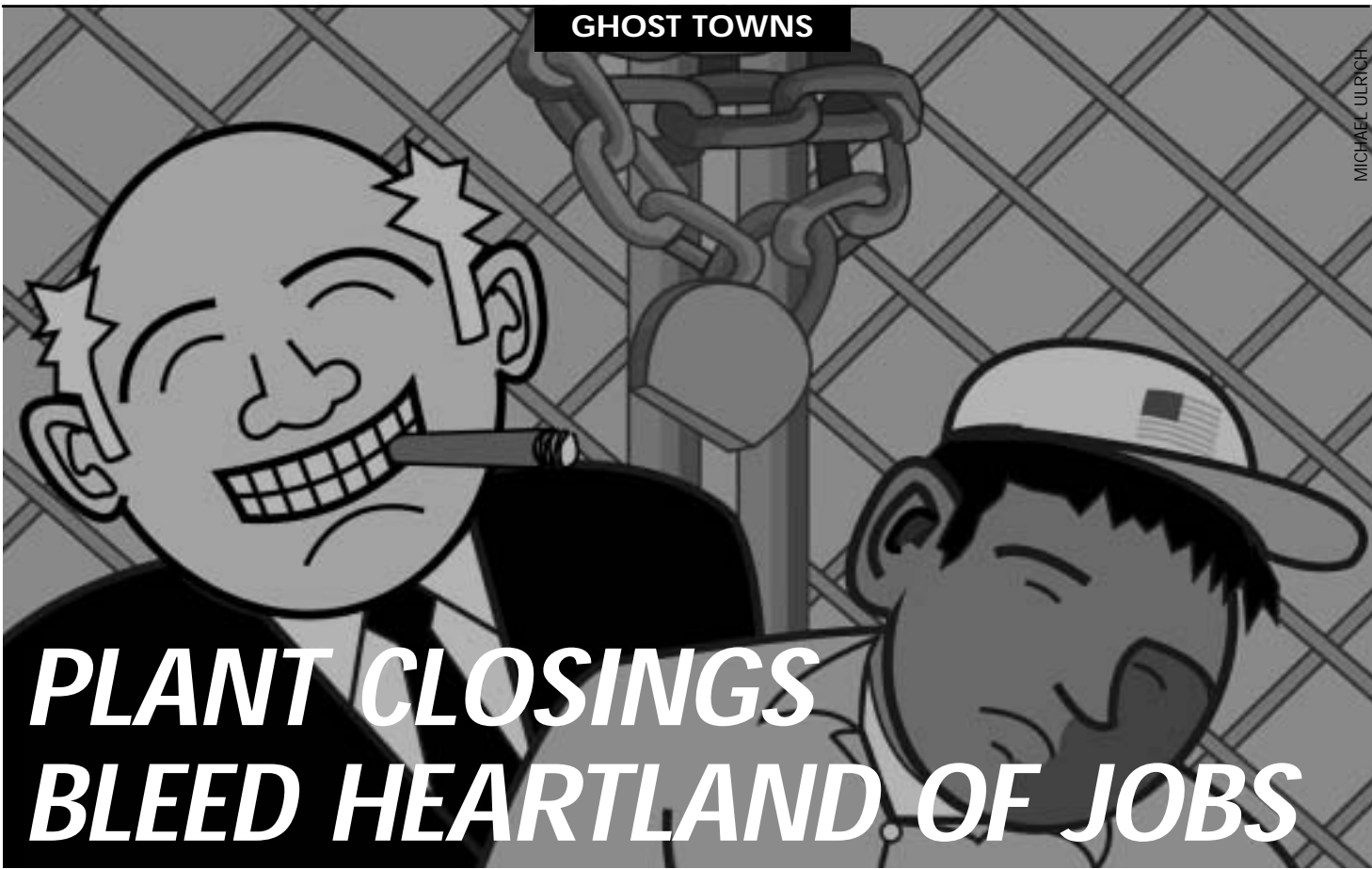
FIGHTING FOR RECOGNITION

Regardless of their leanings on the issue, non-affiliated candidates are receiving less media attention than those endorsed by the two groups waging war over immigration.

"Many Sierra Club members aren't actively involved with any of these groups," says Kleppner. "Those people are getting a twisted view of what's going on. The media has bought the Groundswell view."

Despite the lack of recognition these candidates are upbeat.

"I think if we all listen to each other we can have an honest debate," says candidate Karyn Strickler. "If people vote, we can turn this around. If people don't, we're gonna get the best election money can buy."



By BENNETT BAUMER

MARION, INDIANA—Plant closings are an epidemic in this midwestern town of 25,000. According to Mayor Wayne Seybold, in the last two years almost 4,000 workers have lost jobs in Marion, located 60 miles north of Indianapolis.

Layoffs and the arrival of chain restaurants and super stores have changed the face of the town, pushing numerous small businesses in Marion into bankruptcy. Many storefronts in the town square are either abandoned or boarded up, and idle factories dot the area, rusting against barren winter fields.

Hundreds of workers at Marion's Thomson electronics factory were the latest to receive the devastating news. On a Monday morning last month as workers were clocking into the factory, corporate executives were meeting thousands of miles away in France to decide their fate.

The plant manager dropped a bombshell the next day: the factory was closing effective immediately; clean out your lockers. The same day a large section of the plant mysteriously caught on fire and a worker is being chared with arson. Thomson is the parent company of RCA, and is owned by a French conglomerate. The Marion plant produced tubes for RCA television sets.

UNION BLUES  
AFL-CIO LAUNCHES "SHOW US THE JOBS" TOUR

By TONY PECINOVSKY

ST. LOUIS, MO—More than 1,000 trade unionists, community activists, and youth and students welcomed the AFL-CIO "Show Us the Jobs" bus tour here March 24. The rally was the official bus tour kickoff, and it brought attention to the Bush Administration's attacks on working families, overtime pay, and the largest job loss in recent U.S. history.

The bus tour was scheduled to visit 18 midwest cities in eight states in eight days. Making the tour were 51 laid-off or fired workers, workers unable to find new jobs, or workers who have found new jobs but at sub-standard wages.

At the rally, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said, "I wish I could tell you these are 51 isolated individuals." Sweeney explained, "Two-thirds of our states have fewer jobs today than in 2001. This is the first administration

In the last few years Indiana has lost almost 100,000 jobs – and the story in other mid-western states is no better.

Key electoral battleground states such as Michigan and Ohio have bled hundreds of thousands of jobs since free-trade agreements, such as NAFTA, have enticed owners of American factories to move to the global south for cheaper labor. Thomson will close another factory in Ohio in the coming months.

Here in Marion, workers were stunned by the immediacy of their factory closing. "There'd been rumors for the past four years the factory would close. It was just the nature of how they did it because people had given their all," said Ford McGibbon, who had worked at Thomson for 31 years.

When the mayor's office was asked for comment, a spokesperson said, "you've got the right place for plant closures." Meanwhile, both local and state officials promised unemployment and tuition help for laid-off workers.

Other Indiana counties have lured some service and factory jobs back into the state, though most are non-union and lack benefits. This is bitter fruit for laid-off workers who know that the abandoned unionized factories will not be operating anymore.

"The bosses said it wasn't our fault, it was economics. I'm planning on going back to

school, but that doesn't guarantee you a job," said Thomson quality control inspector Larry White. The economics that Thomson officials referred goes beyond low pay.

"Cheap labor is shorthand for more than just wages. When corporations move, they get to reset the social clock," observed Jeff Cowie, author of *Capital Moves, RCA's Quest for Cheap Labor*.

Though the Marion plant is not moving – just shutting down – Thomson produces goods in Mexico and China. In both countries workers make a fraction of the \$15.98 an hour average in Marion. At the Mexicali plant, workers earn \$2.30 an hour. Furthermore, unions in Mexico tend to be corrupt and in China unions are controlled by the state. Toss in "business-friendly" governments and multinationals such as Thomson can evade environmental regulations, labor laws and human rights, creating a tough situation for North American unions.

"Union hands are tied and they aren't as strong these days because of the erosion of laws," McGibbon said. Many Thomson workers felt that the local union did what it could do, but there was anger at the parent union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). "The lay-offs were difficult and we [the local union] were a little out of our league dealing with Thomson. The international should've helped us out," said White.

How to fight plant closures and lay-offs strikes at the survival of industrial unions. Jim Spellane, IBEW Communications Director, says, "we've protested closures and even offered concessions but it's a structural problem in our economy."

Marion's Thomson workers will receive one-week severance for every year worked and some health benefits. To combat closings, other industrial unions are using tactics similar to those of the IBEW. The United Autoworkers has negotiated a contract with the Big Three automakers that protected health benefits, provided modest wage increases and language to maintain production in the United States, though some plants would be closed. However, the contract creates two-tier wage systems for new hires and veteran workers.

Jane Slaughter of *Labor Notes* criticizes contract language on factory closings because corporations can undermine the intent of the contract by "idling the plant and working with skeleton crews."

Though some Thomson workers feel misrepresented by the parent union, Ford McGibbon says he would join a union at another plant if given the choice. "These factories in Marion now pay \$7 to \$8 an hour and mistreat workers. Unions aren't just about wages, they're about rights too."

THE  
PEOPLE'S  
LAWYER

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR BOSS  
CONTESTS YOUR RIGHT TO  
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Unemployment insurance is a worker's right. The militant labor movement of the 1930s won this benefit when it forced the adoption of the Social Security Act of 1935. Like Social Security, unemployment insurance is partly financed by an employer payroll tax. This means freelancers do not qualify. In New York, the State Department of Labor decides whether you qualify and how much you will receive. The maximum payment is \$405 per week for 26 weeks, unless extended by the federal government. Currently, there are 2.1 million people nationwide who have exhausted their benefits and are still unemployed.

To qualify, you must be currently able to work and actively looking for work but not working for your own business. You must accept an offer of work, even temporarily, if it is similar to your previous job or in your field of training. Immigrants with green cards or work authorization are eligible for unemployment benefits. If you lost your job due to a strike or lockout, you can't collect until the 50th day after the beginning of the strike (sooner if the strike ends).

Your employer may deny you benefits if he or she claims you quit or were fired for cause. To fight back, you can request a hearing by an administrative law judge at the Department of Labor. To win benefits, you must prove that you were laid off or that you quit with "good cause." An example of good cause is if you were forced to work in dangerous or abusive conditions. Even if you were fired, you may still be able to collect if you can show at a hearing that there was no misconduct on your part or that the firing was at your bosses' whim.

At the hearing, you have the right to be represented by an attorney (at your own expense). You may ask witnesses to testify on your behalf. In the letter setting the date and time of your hearing, it will state the "Purpose of Hearing." Go prepared to give your version of the facts.

You can learn why your boss is contesting your case by going to the Department of Labor, 110 King Street (near Canal Street) in advance to inspect your file. If you want to learn how the Department of Labor has decided in similar cases to yours, there is a user-friendly research guide on the net under unemployment insurance. This guide is called the UI Interpretation Index.

Mark Humowiecki of the Legal Aid Society suggests you focus on the date you were fired, and bring any evidence that supports your version of the events, such as a date book, phone records, letters or photographs.

If you are not happy with the administrative law judge's decision, you can appeal it but only if you can show the judge was wrong in her legal or factual conclusion. Like other benefits provided by the state, only political pressure can preserve and expand these benefits. To take action on the issues affecting unemployed people, visit a project of the National Employment Law Project.

— Ann M. Schneider

*The People's Lawyer is a project of the Nat'l Lawyers Guild, NYC Chapter. Contact the chapter at [www.nlgnyc.org](http://www.nlgnyc.org) or at (212) 679-6018.*





Early in the 19th century the U.S. claimed the right to dominate both the North and South American continents. The "Monroe Doctrine" formulated in 1823, was put into practice in 1846 with the declaration of war against Mexico and the annexation of extensive territories including California and Texas. In 1898 the U.S. declared itself at war with Spain with the end being the annexing of Puerto Rico, Guam, Philippines, and Hawaii. In 1912 the Marines invaded and occupied Nicaragua until 1933. In the first half of the 20th century the U.S. interfered with the internal affairs of various countries including Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Colombia-provoking the secession of Panama in order to control the strategic canal. This map outlines some past American interventions.



## Nicaragua

1981-1990

The U.S. government finances and provides military support for the "Contras," who wage a terrorist war against Nicaragua's Sandanista government. The "Contras" assassinate thousands of civilians, destroy crops and mine the ports.



## Guatemala

1954

A CIA organized coup against the democratically elected government of President Jacobo Arbenz leads to 30 years of dictatorship, violence, and repression.

## El Salvador

1980-1992

75,000 people are killed and 8,000 left missing during El Salvador's civil war while the U.S. supports successive military governments with more than \$500 million per year in assistance. The CIA plays a crucial role in the development of paramilitary groups that are responsible for many of the war's worst atrocities.

## Argentina

1976-1983

Argentina's military launches a coup with the support of the U.S. government. The military regime produces 30,000 missing persons and record external debt.



## Panamá

1958

120 students die in confrontations with American soldiers giving rise to a series of protests against U.S. control of the Panama Canal zone.

1964

January 9th, known as "Day of the Martyrs", a group of Panamanian students is assaulted for trying to fly the Panamanian flag in the canal zone. Around 5,000 American troops with tanks and a mob of armed civilians participated in the repression leaving four students dead.

1989

The U.S. invades the country under the pretext of arresting President Manuel Noriega. Experimenting with new night-fighting technologies, the U.S. military bombards crowded neighborhoods in Panama City killing more than 2,000 people.

## Grenada

1983

American troops invade Grenada to dismiss a popular government.

Belize

Guatemala

Honduras

El Salvador

Nicaragua

Costa Rica

Panamá

Colombia

Ecuador

Perú

Bolivia

Paraguay

Chile

Uruguay

Argentina



Cuba

Haiti

República Dominicana

Puerto Rico

## República Dominicana

1963-1965

A destabilization campaign against President Juan Bosch culminates in a coup. The U.S. sends 22,000 soldiers to combat constitutional forces that fight for Bosch's return.

1965 - 1966

During the "Intervention for the stabilization" of the presumed anarchy that started in the Dominican Republic, the American government sends in 14,000 soldiers.

## Brasil

1964

The CIA spends millions to destabilize the government of President Joao Goulart culminating in a military coup. Goulart had initiated a series of reforms that limited the profits of transnational companies and he nationalized a subsidiary of the IT&T.

## Bolivia

1967

A local military group, supported by anti-revolutionary American agents, assassinate Comandante Che Guevara.

## Chile

1973

"I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people," Henry Kissinger said when Socialist Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile in 1970. Three years later, Allende is deposed in a U.S.-backed coup. More than 3,000 leftists are murdered during the 17-year military dictatorship that follows.

## Haiti

2004

Democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide reports that he was kidnapped and taken by force from his country by American and French military operatives. Aristide was the first elected president in Haiti's 200-year history. In the 1990's several puppet military dictatorships and governments occurred around Aristide's multiple ousters.



## Cuba

1959 - 2004

Anti-Castro exiles invade Cuba in April 1961 and are swiftly defeated by Cuban revolutionary forces at the Bay of Pigs. In the following decades, the U.S. tries everything from assassination attempts against Cuban president Fidel Castro to an economic embargo to propaganda campaigns to dislodge the Cuban government.

## Uruguay

1976

On the 4th of July, 24 Uruguayan and Chilean political refugees are kidnapped and tortured by Chilean and Uruguayan Intelligence Service as part of "Operation Condor", which was supported by the CIA, persecuted leftists active in the Southern Cone countries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia.

## CHRONOLOGY OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTS

1950

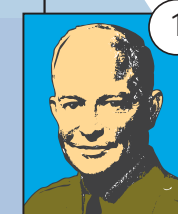
1955

1960

1965

1970

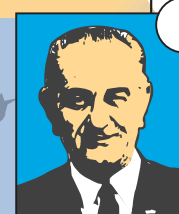
1975



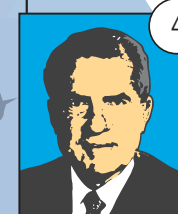
Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Jan. 20, 1953  
Jan. 20, 1961



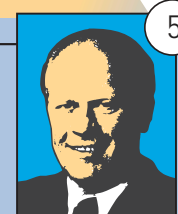
John F. Kennedy  
Jan. 20, 1961  
Jan. 20, 1963



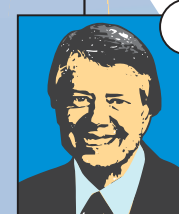
Lyndon B. Johnson  
Nov. 22, 1963  
Jan. 20, 1969



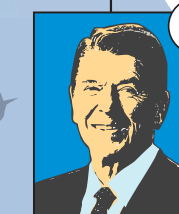
Richard Nixon  
Jan. 20, 1969  
Aug. 9, 1974



Gerald R. Ford  
Aug. 9, 1974  
Jan. 20, 1977



Jimmy Carter  
Jan. 20, 1977  
Jan. 20, 1981



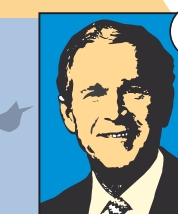
Ronald W. Reagan  
Jan. 20, 1981  
Jan. 20, 1989



George H. W. Bush  
Jan. 20, 1989  
Jan. 20, 1993



William Jefferson Clinton  
Jan. 20, 1993  
Jan. 20, 2001



George W. Bush  
Jan. 20, 2001  
present



IN BRIEF

WHITE HOUSE WITHHOLDS INFO OVER MEDICARE BILL

The White House is being accused of withholding evidence from Congress during the passage of a Medicare prescription drug bill last November. While administration officials told Congress that the cost would be \$395 billion, Richard Foster, the chief actuary of the program, has said that his superiors threatened to fire him if he disclosed that the cost would actually be \$520 billion over a decade. Thomas Scully, Medicare's then administrator, and Doug Badger, Bush's top healthcare adviser, refused to appear before the House Ways and Means Committee during the first week of April this year. According to the Independent, Medicare recipients have "reacted with hostility" to the drug plan and Republicans are losing support from older Americans over this issue.

FEDS CRACK DOWN ON FILE SHARING

On April 1, a House Judiciary subcommittee approved a bill to send those convicted of sharing copyrighted material to prison for up to 10 years. The Piracy Deterrence and Education Act of 2004 goes next to the full Judiciary Committee for review, which could consider it within a month. Also, a federal judge has ruled that the recording industry can force the University of Arizona to provide the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of four people accused of using its computers to violate copyright law by downloading music. The recording industry sued more than 500 people on March 23, including computer users at 20 other universities, in its ongoing effort to thwart the sharing of digital music files over the internet. These actions are in contrast to a Canadian federal court ruling that peer-to-peer file sharing is not illegal.

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS FOUNDER IMPRISONED

Kathy Kelly, founder of Voices in the Wilderness, the anti-Iraq sanctions group, has been sentenced to three months in jail for entering a U.S. military institution in Wisconsin. Kelley walked onto the site in March 2003 where a tower used to command cruise missiles is located. Her release date will be Aug. 6. Another activist, the Rev. Jerry Zawada, has been sentenced to seven months for his involvement. Both Kathy and Jerry testified to the judge that they had personally witnessed the tremendous suffering caused when civilian areas were bombed with cruise missiles.

WHEN BUSH COMES TO SHOVE... WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR NEWS?

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**FMLN WINS THE STREETS:** ARENA takes the election. Left, FMLN presidential candidate Schafik Handal. Right, San Salvador rally. PHOTO: CISPES.ORG

SALVADORAN RIGHT TAKES ELECTIONS REGIME UNCHANGED

By NEELA GHOSHAL

The months leading up to the March 21 presidential elections in El Salvador were marked by a palpable excitement there and among Salvadoran communities in the United States.

The ruling right-wing ARENA (Alianza Republicano Nacional) party was losing ground to the FMLN (Frente Farabundo Marti de la Liberacion Nacional), the left-wing party born out of El Salvador's 1980s guerrilla movement. The Frente had become the majority party in the national legislature in 2003, surpassing ARENA.

The Salvadoran right, with full support from the U.S. State Department, responded by mounting a fear-and-sneer campaign. Veiled threats by U.S. officials combined with ARENA propaganda portraying FMLN candidate Schafik Handal as a terrorist, had their desired effect. When the votes were tallied, a shocking 58 percent went to ARENA's Tony Saca, while Handal pulled in a mere 37 percent.

The results were a bitter disappointment to the many Salvadorans who, fed up with 15 years of ARENA's anti-poor policies, labored on behalf of former guerrilla leader Handal.

Several weeks before the election, FMLN activists in Hempstead, Long Island, met around a white cafeteria table under fluorescent lights on the first floor of the Workplace Project, developing strategies to target Salvadorans in the United States. Of the 2 million Salvadorans in the United States, upwards of 15,000 live in the Hempstead area.

The FMLN committee had been distributing leaflets reading "Salvadoran! The time for change has arrived... Call your families in El Salvador and tell them to vote for the FMLN."

Despite the sense of possibility, FMLN sup-

porters realized what they were up against. Juan Carlos Molina, a former guerrilla fighter and co-founder of the Hempstead FMLN committee, spoke over the loud hum of a Coke machine: "We're not fighting against ARENA in this election. We're fighting against the U.S. If we win, we will have beat imperialism. If we lose, we lost to imperialism."

To what extent did the Bush administration influence the ARENA victory? The U.S. government propped up the El Salvador regime during the brutal 1980-1992 civil war in which tens of thousands of civilians were massacred, and has maintained a cozy relationship with ARENA since its founding in 1981 by death squad organizer Roberto D'Aubisson.

Throughout the 1990s, a string of ARENA presidents catered to U.S. interests by carrying out structural adjustment policies, privatizing utilities and social services, and ultimately abandoning the Salvadoran colon in favor of the dollar, which drove up prices for basic goods.

Such policies concretized economic polarization in the country, said another Hempstead FMLN activist. "The right-wing in El Salvador lives in another country, or another world — they say there's no poverty, while people are dying of it."

"Opposition to these policies has been accumulating," said Burke Stansbury, program director at the New York-based Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, shortly before the election. "ARENA's neoliberal model has negatively affected poor people and workers. Sectors that used to be allied with ARENA — professionals, store owners, bus drivers — are now turning on ARENA and looking towards the left."

The 2003 legislative elections were the clearest indication to date of the FMLN's increasing public support. Shortly after, the Bush administration began its campaign against the party. Last June, the State Department's Daniel Fisk charged that the FMLN's trade policy "looks as if it were written in Havana." Outgoing ambassador Rose Likins fretted that "U.S. businesses that have invested in developing sectors key to national life... could see their investments compromised" under the FMLN, and further implied that the party's policies were at odds with the U.S. "war on terror."

As such, the White House began to wage its own terror campaign directed toward the Sal-

vadoran population. Roger Noriega of the State Department refused to meet with Handal during a recent visit to El Salvador, although he met with smaller party candidates who ultimately received 3 percent of the vote at most.

Discussing the FMLN's opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), he remarked, "it is fair to note that the FMLN campaign has emphasized its differences with [the U.S.] concerning CAFTA... and for this reason it is fair that the Salvadoran people consider what type of relations a new government could have with us."

Jeb Bush also visited the country to promote CAFTA, giving a bizarre speech in which he instructed Salvadorans, "If a person has faith in the future, that person must be a capitalist, because socialism is a pessimistic philosophy." He thanked God for a president like ARENA's Francisco Flores, saying progress would be impossible without a president who "understands the concept" of free trade.

A week before the elections, Bush's envoy to Latin America, Otto Reich, claimed, "The FMLN has fraternal relations with terrorist governments and groups." He added, "I don't think this would lead to good relations between the United States and El Salvador if the FMLN wins... We are concerned about the commercial, economic, and migration-related relations that the United States has with El Salvador." Conservative U.S. Congresspersons also threw themselves into the fray, with Thomas Tancredo (R-CO) threatening to propose legislation cutting off remittances sent by Salvadoran in the United States back to their families if the FMLN won. Remittances are 50 percent of the country's GDP, says Stansbury.

Stansbury reported that many Salvadorans chose to vote for ARENA at the last minute, and that "many voted almost guiltily, out of fear of what would happen if the FMLN won. In terms of the exit polls, the only thing I can attribute it to is that people who voted for the FMLN did so proudly, and sought out the pollsters afterwards to say how they had voted." Still, he noted, "there's always that sense that the struggle continues. The elections were just one way for the FMLN to put forward their program. They will continue to fight CAFTA, privatizations and other anti-poor policies through legislation, from the streets, through movement politics and through resistance."

As such, the White House began to wage its own terror campaign directed toward the Sal-



**SCARY STUFF:** ARENA relied on U.S. bluster and crude fears of a red planet.

U.N. IMPOTENT, IRRELEVANT

By DONALD PANETH

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.—The United States is circulating to members of the United Nations Security Council a draft resolution would mandate all states adopt laws prohibiting "non-state" actors from manufacturing, possessing, or using weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The resolution would also mandate that all states take measures to establish domestic controls to prevent WMD proliferation. It would specify that its provisions not conflict with states' obligations under the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other weapons' conventions.

China, France, Russia and the United Kingdom — the other permanent members of the Council — are supporting the draft. However, the smaller, non-permanent members are discussing modifications.

A number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are opposed to the resolution. Among them are the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, the U.N. Office of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons.

The draft is flawed on several counts, they say. It seeks to turn the Security Council into

a legislative body directing states to enact criminal and other laws. It fails to spell out the disarmament obligation under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to identify measures to reduce and eliminate nuclear arsenals.

Proliferation of nuclear weapons and their potential acquisition by terrorists, "will never be effectively addressed so long as nuclear weapons are highly valued by major powers," the NGOs said.

The U.S., meanwhile, continues to sideline U.N. activities by shortchanging the organization. As of March 15, 2004, it had not paid one cent of its 2004 regular U.N. budget assessment of \$362.8 million. Overall, the U.S. owes the U.N. a total of \$1.548 billion for past regular budget assessments, and current and past assessments for international tribunals, peacekeeping operations, and the U.N. capital master plan.

Obstacles to U.N. activities are widespread. On March 26, several U.N. agencies said they might have to terminate humanitarian relief operations in the Gaza Strip due to new movement restrictions imposed by Israel.

For the past three weeks, nearly all U.N. vehicles had been prohibited from crossing through the Erez checkpoint. In addition, the movement of food containers through Karni — the only commercial crossing point in Gaza — is currently obstructed. U.N. operations

provide more than half of Gaza's essential social services, including food assistance to several hundred thousand people.

Violence continued, not only in Palestine/Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kosovo and Haiti.

In Haiti on March 30, the U.N. Special Adviser, Reginald Dumas, called for a long-term international presence of not less than 20 years. Dumas said that Haiti's healthcare, education, human rights, justice, and police institutions had collapsed.

Also on March 30, U.N. agencies said that the already dire humanitarian situation in the Darfur region of Sudan had worsened. Thousands of internally displaced persons were facing water shortages and outbreaks of communicable diseases.

Attacks against civilians were reported to be occurring daily across Darfur. U.N. accounts said there had been indiscriminate killings, gang rapes, looting, burning of villages and abductions.

Since fighting erupted early in 2003 between the Sudanese government, militias, and rebel groups, an estimated 750,000 Sudanese had been displaced. Another 110,000 people had fled west across the border into neighboring Chad.



**GUY PHILIPPE**, center, who led the coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He is a former police chief who was trained by U.S. Special Forces in the early 1990s.

Throughout 2003, their followers conducted a low-level insurgency in the remote border region with the Dominican Republic that claimed around 30 lives. In February, their campaign suddenly caught fire and within weeks, an armed insurrection had toppled Aristide. The rebels' leader Guy Philippe triumphantly told a press conference in the capital, Port-au-Prince: "I am the chief." Asked what he meant, he said, "the military chief."

Although the insurgents' links to the businessmen heading the anti-Aristide protest movement remain sketchy, it is clear that the armed and unarmed elements of the rebellion are moving closer together.

When downtown Port-au-Prince was besieged by looters in early March, Maurice Lafortune, head of the Chamber of Commerce and a leading figure in the Group of 184, called on Philippe and his men to restore order. Another G184 leader, the sweatshop owner, Charles Henri Baker, could hardly contain his admiration for the "liberators", speaking of the need for an army to protect businesses from "the mob".

Political party leaders, including the long-time U.S. favorite, Evans Paul, held friendly talks with Philippe and other insurgent leaders. Amnesty International protested about the apparent political influence of convicted murderers such as Chamblain and the Gonaves FRAPH chief, Jean Tatoune. "The last

thing the country needs is for those who committed abuses in the past to take up leadership positions," it said.

As ever though, the U.S. attempted to maintain the existent power structure during the transition. Philippe quickly announced his men would lay down their arms, after a dressing down from senior officers in the U.S. military intervention force. Days later, Philippe responded to the murder of demonstrators celebrating Aristide's departure, with the words: "very soon I will be obliged to order my troops to take up arms again."

Continued violence and instability in Haiti will increase the pressure to re-instate the FAD'H. Foreign governments that have committed peace-keeping troops want their forces out as soon as possible, and the political parties that control the interim government are beholden to the forces that enthroned them.

Behind the scenes, members of the country's tiny elite, especially the assembly sector businessmen who bankroll the political parties, want the FAD'H back to guarantee the established order. It has done so ever since its creation during the U.S. occupation of 1915-34.

Charles Arthur is director of the Haiti Support Group and author of Haiti in Focus: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture. This article originally appeared on CounterPunch.org.

WORLD IN BRIEF

LIBERIAN TEENS STOW AWAY TO ARGENTINA

Fleeing a nation ravaged by civil war, three Liberian teenagers climbed the anchor of a Maltese cargo ship and landed in San Nicholas, just outside of Buenos Aires. The teens survived the 16-day trip eating only cookies and drinking one bottle of water. One of the brothers is currently hospitalized in serious condition, suffering from malnutrition and dehydration. The brothers say they had seen their mother murdered, and all three are applying for asylum. Several Argentine families have offered to adopt the teens.

DUTCH GOVERNMENT MAKES WAR ON IMMIGRANTS, POOR

The Dutch government, after passing a law in January that will deport 26,000 long-term refugees, blocked a Rotterdam protest in late March by closing off the city. Human Rights Watch and other groups have condemned the new law, which contains such harsh conditions that only 2,100 refugees will be allowed to stay. Last Dec. 1, Rotterdam also passed a law establishing a minimum income level for those who want to move into the city and forcing the poor to leave the city permanently if they move out.

GERMAN WORKERS PROTEST LABOR 'REFORMS'

Hundreds of thousands of German workers, joined by a spontaneous spill of supporters, took the streets the first week of April protesting the government's "Agenda 2010." Germany's large union confederation helped organize the massive marches in cities from Berlin in the east to Cologne in the west. Agenda 2010 seeks to cut pensions, undermine labor rights and drastically cut unemployment benefits. In recent weeks, French firefighters and Italian retirees with state pensions have also demonstrated against neo-liberal policies.

CONSERVATIVE SPANISH GOV'T APOLOGIZES TO U.N.

The outgoing Spanish conservative "Popular Party," led by Bush ally Jose Maria Aznar, officially apologized before the U.N. for blaming ETA, an armed Basque separatist group, for the March 11 train bombings. A militant Islamic fundamentalist group with ties to Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the blast. Many in the U.N. felt pressured by the Aznar regime to pass a resolution condemning ETA without evidence of the group's involvement. Aznar's handpicked successor lost in a stunning defeat to the left-center Socialist party, largely due to the conservative government's false blaming of ETA.

ICJ CONDEMNS U.S. CONVICTIONS OF 51 MEXICANS

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled on March 31 that the United States was in violation of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations when it sentenced 51 Mexican nationals to death row. The court stated that the violation occurred when U.S. officials failed to inform the Mexican suspects of their right to assistance from their government, putting their defense at a severe disadvantage. The ICJ ordered that the U.S. "review and reconsider" the separate cases of the 51 men, but the court has no power to enforce such an order even though their rulings are supposed to be considered final. On March 3, 1999, a similar case was closed between Germany and America, when the ICJ gave German national, Walter Lagrand, a stay of execution. Instead the U.S. executed Lagrand later that day.

DEBATE: NYC.INDYMEDIA.ORG



# SHEIK YASSIN & THE RISE OF HAMAS

By TRISH SCHUH

DAMASCUS, Syria—Dust rose waist-high wherever we went that day in Gaza City four years ago. Neighborhoods were reduced to jagged half-buildings, demolished homes and bomb craters. Gray cinder block rubble swallowed up entire streets.

But inside the home of Hamas founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, it was quiet and cool. The 63-year-old man greeted us from a wheelchair in front of bookshelves lined with textbooks, Hamas paraphernalia, photos of his 11 children, and pictures of colleagues. At center front was an ornate, gilded Quran with a rifle insignia.

Around him were his deputies, one propping up the Sheikh's ailing body and another holding an electronic device to catch and amplify his high-pitched whisper. Quadriplegic since childhood, hard of hearing and almost completely blind, it was difficult to reconcile this paralyzed invalid with Israel's characterization as "head of one of the world's most dangerous terrorist organizations."

In fact, Israel funded the forerunners of Hamas in the early 1980s, hoping it would undermine the Palestine Liberation Organization. Israeli tacticians gambled that religious rivals would defuse Yassir Arafat's secular appeal, and thus diminish the Palestinian resistance. Instead, this gambit produced a new and harsher foe: Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

Yassin was born in the late 1930s in the Arab fishing village of Al Jorja, near what is now the southern coastal port of Ashkelon. After Israelis bulldozed his home in the 1948 war, Yassin's family fled along with tens of thousands of other refugees to the crowded Gaza Strip. There the 12-year-old Yassin suffered a sports accident that left him paralyzed from the neck down.

In 1959, Yassin studied in Egypt at the Ain Shams University. He returned to Gaza a year later a devotee of Muslim Brotherhood philosophy, which was later to provide the ideological framework for Hamas. The ensuing years were spent teaching Arabic language and Islamic Studies. While also preaching in area mosques, Yassin's charisma and distinctive physical appearance gained him renown and a following.

The Israeli government sentenced him to 13 years imprisonment in 1983 for weapons possession and charges of trying to start a subversive underground organization. The sentence was commuted two years later during a prisoner swap.

Yassin co-founded Hamas, an acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, during the outbreak of the first intifada in 1987. In its own words, Hamas was founded "with the objective of destroying the Zionist entity and establishing Palestine from the sea to the river" using armed struggle, "martyrdom operations" (suicide bombings) and a rejection of negotiated accords.

Hamas opposed the 1993 Oslo Accords, with Yassin declaring: "No Palestinian was convinced that this path would lead to peace, secure Palestinian territories or establish a Palestinian State." "As I see it, Israel was founded on oppression and the confiscation of land. Any entity based on oppression is doomed for disintegration."

The Palestinian National Authority established under Oslo became a magnet for corruption. Hamas capitalized on popular discontent by providing social services, such as opening hospitals, orphanages, food banks, mosques and schools.

Prior to February 1994, when 29 Muslims were killed while praying in the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron, Hamas' stated strategy was to hit only military targets. The first "shaheed" (martyr) suicide bombings against civilians occurred two months later.

Sheikh Yassin often condemned the Palestinian Authority for not supporting resistance efforts against Israel and openly accused Arafat of sabotaging military operations. Aware of Hamas' mass popularity and Yassin's status, Arafat never dared a public confrontation, but did put Yassin under house arrest in 1998.

After the Al-Aqsa intifada began in September 2000, Yassin proposed ceasefires on the condition that Israel withdraw from the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, as well as halt the targeting of Palestinian activists. Israel refused.

On March 22, 2004, Israeli aircraft fired three missiles at Yassin as he exited his regular 5 a.m. mosque prayers. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon justified the execution on the grounds that Yassin's policies had been responsible for the death or injury of thousands of innocent Israelis.

The killing sparked demonstrations from Egypt to Pakistan, and even al Qaeda responded with threats of retaliation.

Before his death Sheikh Yassin said, "If I am killed there will arrive a thousand like me. They [the Israelis] should know that the battle will continue..."



**THE BODY OF YASSIN** carried through the streets of Gaza by resistance fighters. 100,000 mourners turned out in the largest gathering Gaza has seen since the signing of the Oslo accords, which were buried alongside Yassin.

Israel Minister of Defence Shaul Mofaz has said that "Hamas is a strategic enemy that must be destroyed." Several Likud ministers have said that Israel will continue their policy of assassination, openly threatening Palestinian President Yassir Arafat.

## PALESTINIAN POLITICS FACE SHAKE-UP IN AFTERMATH OF YASSIN'S ASSASSINATION

# WHAT'S NEXT FOR HAMAS

By ATEF SAAD

The most pressing question following the assassination of 65-year-old Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, founder of Hamas, is what will happen to the movement.

Observers say Hamas, in line with the leadership and inspiration of Yassin, succeeded in reinforcing the tradition of Shura – the Islamic system of an elected council taking decisions based on majority rule. This ensured internal democracy better than any other Palestinian faction of equal size, and is what has made Hamas so unified and cohesive.

According to Mohammed Ghazal, a Hamas political leader, "the absence of Ahmad Yassin will not cause organizational confusion within the movement. Policies are formulated and developed at the highest organizational levels within the movement according to the Shura system and decisions are made according to democratic principles and are finalized according to [the will of] the majority, not according to one individual no matter how high-level they are. Sheikh Yassin... was subject to the same standards applied to all members of the leadership."

Political analyst and author of *Palestinian Political Culture*, Basem Zubeidi agrees. However, he believes the

movement will feel a loss. "His [Yassin's] departure will leave a void and will force Hamas to look towards new possibilities." Still, he adds, "perhaps the effect will be less in Hamas than it would have been, for example in Fateh, if President Arafat were to be removed from the scene."

"Sheikh Ahmad Yassin had what political scientists call the ability to rationalize political thought," says Zubeidi. "This is what we saw when Hamas declared a truce and ordered a halt to its operations against Israel, and with the movement's declaration, made by Sheikh Yassin himself, that they were willing to halt operations in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. We all remember the disputes between the leaderships inside and abroad. However, the Sheikh, with his clout and status was able to bring the movement's viewpoint closer to that of the PA [Palestinian Authority] and other Arab leaders."

However, Israel disregarded the declaration, which was more or less a proposal to stop the bloodshed of civilians on both sides. "Hamas has moved closer to international legitimacy, but Israel has moved further away under the leadership of Sharon, who could never envision a Palestinian state on 22

percent of the land of historical Palestine," Zubeidi continued.

On the Palestinian street, people believe that Hamas' popularity climbs with each slain leader. According to 50-year-old Khalid Saleh, this is for more than one reason. "Hamas leaders are not involved in government corruption and are ready to sacrifice."

Al Najah University sociologist Iyad Barghouti argues that "Israel's assassination of Yassin will enable Hamas to make him a symbol and turn him into a new 'prophet' for the Islamic movements in Palestine, the region and the entire Muslim world. Israel has assassinated a symbol of the Palestinian resistance for many Muslims the world over."

The assassination will create an even more intense conflict with the Israelis and, in the context of Hamas, will strengthen those less moderate. According to Zubeidi, Yassin's killing will be like, "a bucket of cold water in the faces of a number of moderate Arab leaders."

How will Yassin's assassination affect the Palestinian arena?

"Hamas will become more stringent towards Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and Yassin's absence will strengthen the relationship between Palestinian military factions," says Barghouti. "The Palestinian Authority will lose and Israel will lose a number of its citizens and soldiers because Hamas will respond at any cost. Moderate Arab regimes such as Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia that maintained relations with Hamas through Sheikh Yassin will lose as well."

Even leaders of Palestinian leftist movements see a tremendous and irreplaceable loss in Sheikh Yassin's departure. Asem Abdel Hadi, politburo member of the Palestinian People's Party says, "There is no doubt that his assassination and his representation as a symbol of the resistance in all its forms against the Israeli occupation indicates that Sharon is not interested in reaching a political solution with the Palestinians."

According to Aref Hashem, a leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, "He was a unifying force between the Palestinian factions."

During a commemoration ceremony in the center of Nablus the words of a spokesperson for the Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Fateh's military wing, bore this out: "We are all Ahmad Yassin," he told the thousands who attended. "Brothers in Hamas and the Izzedin Al Qassam Brigades, Ahmad Yassin is not yours alone – he belongs to the Palestinian resistance."

Excerpted from [www.PalestineReport.org](http://www.PalestineReport.org)



## WORLD AT WAR, CONTINUED FROM COVER

into Falluja during that week. Jonathan Steele of *The Guardian* described the result: "Rockets from helicopter gunships had punctured bedroom walls. Patio floors and front gates were pockmarked by shrapnel. Car doors looked like sieves. In the mayhem 18 Iraqis lay dead. On the American side two marines were killed."

Falluja is where more than 15 unarmed protesters were gunned down by U.S. troops last April. And nine police were killed by trigger-happy GIs months later. Falluja residents have a long list of grievances against their occupiers that U.S. media rarely present.

Driving home the point of a broader struggle, a previously unknown group, the Brigades of Martyr Ahmed Yassin, claimed responsibility for killing the mercenaries, calling it "a gift from the people of Falluja to the people of Palestine."

The group that took responsibility for the train bombings in Spain also emphasized a growing global clash. The Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades/al-Qaeda said in a statement, "Is it okay for them to kill our children, women and elderly in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Kashmir, while we should refrain from killing them?"

There is some doubt as to whether this group really exists, but this is beside the point. Al-Qaeda has become less an organization and more a meme: it is a cultural phenomenon that reproduces itself.

A report in the *Washington Post* on April 4 noted that "the al Qaeda network is becoming less able to mount attacks," but, according to a U.S. counterterrorism official, scores of extremist groups have "gravitated to al Qaeda in recent years where before such linkages did not exist." The result, said the official, J. Cofer Black, is that the U.S. war "may transition from defeating a group to fighting a movement."

If we think of al-Qaeda as a virus then satellite television and the internet are the vectors.

What we in the West think is increasingly irrelevant. Muslims the world over can watch on television how the United States and its key allies are embroiled in conflicts against radical Islamic groups in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir, Yemen, the Philippines, Palestine, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and now Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Almost all these conflicts are homegrown, but by grouping them

together under the war on terror the Bush administration is creating the clash of civilizations that it publicly denies is occurring.

Evangelical Christians have taken up the banner of holy war, beyond the hate preached against Islam by our own bloodthirsty mullahs, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and Franklin Graham. At least nine American-sponsored evangelical churches have opened up in Iraq since last summer. One missionary working in Iraq told the *L.A. Times*, "God and the president have given us an opportunity to bring Jesus Christ to the Middle East."

One Iraqi religious leader noted, "Iraqis already see the American occupation as a religious war."

Donald Rumsfeld would agree. In a memo that was leaked last year, Rumsfeld asked, "Are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassahs and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us?"

So for the Pentagon, the war is one against radical Islam. If any more confirmation were needed, U.S. troops in Iraq engaged in open warfare starting April 4 with thousands of armed Shi'ites organized by a young cleric,

Muqtada al-Sadr.

The *New York Times* called the episode "a coordinated Shiite uprising spreading across the country."

Days earlier, al-Sadr had announced he was opening chapters of Hezbollah, formed out of the ashes of Israel's occupation of Lebanon, and Hamas. "I am the beating arm for Hezbollah and Hamas here in Iraq," al-Sadr said.

Additionally, Sunni insurgents have now joined in what can only be described as the Iraqi intifada. The events belie the U.S. contention that outside extremists are behind the insurgency as well as the claim that al-Qaeda elements are fomenting a civil war. If anything, U.S. forces are uniting Sunnis and Shi'ites against the occupation a year after their "liberation."

The silver lining is imperial overstretch. The Pentagon has its hands full in Iraq and increased deployments worldwide are hollowing out the military. And nowhere are there any "successes" in the war on terrorism – elections have been postponed in Afghanistan, Pakistan tribal regions are in revolt and unrest has spread to Uzbekistan.


Yet neither Bush nor Kerry plan to remove



U.S. troops from Iraq or Afghanistan. This is the twisted logic of the state. Ending the occupations would certainly encourage anti-Western forces, but maintaining the troops will only worsen the problem. We will be forced eventually to withdraw from Iraq, the question is whether it will be just Iraq that is inflamed or the whole Middle East.

Many activists note that in barely one year the movement against the Iraq war is already on the scale the anti-Vietnam war movement was by the late 1960s. But that dragged on until 1975.

Only through a combination of coherent movement building, popular pressure and GI resistance can the American crusade be ended. But this time, our cities and homes are on the front lines of this war as well.



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**How to find your G-spot**

The G-spot is about two inches inside the vagina towards the belly, right behind the pubic bone. It's composed of spongy tissue that is wrapped around the urethra. When a woman is aroused, it becomes thicker as it fills with fluid and can be felt through the vaginal wall. Angle your penetration or select a curved sex toy and apply firm rhythmic pressure to pleasure the G-spot. Some women find this sensation highly sexual and some women expel a clear fluid called female ejaculate (it's not urine) from G-spot stimulation. Every woman has a G-spot, but not every woman loves having it pressed or otherwise stimulated. You'll just have to try it for yourself!

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**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Friday, April 16th @ 7pm \$5 Suggested**  
*Gender Binary 201: Gender, Freedom, & Capitalism* with Tara Jensen and Ace McArleton  
Ace and Tara will argue that how activists think about and understand gender, sex, and sexuality (and identity in general) informs political and social practice within movements for gender freedom.

**Saturday, April 17th @ 8pm – Free**  
*The Flying Camel: Opening Our Eyes*. Jewish Women of Color Speak to Progressive Communities From feminist circles to the GLBT movement, from antiracism activism to Middle East peace work, the faces and voices of Jewish women of color are missing.

**Wednesday, April 21st @ 7pm – Free**  
*Revolutionary Panel Celebrating Haydée Santamaría*  
¡Todos somos Haydée! Join this group of truly amazing women artists and activists to celebrate the life and work of Cuban revolutionary heroine Haydée Santamaría.

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139 Ave. A  
(btw. 8th and 9th)  
**May Day Books at Theater for the New City**  
155 First Ave.  
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**Kim's Video**  
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**Jackson Heights Library**  
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**ABOVE 96th ST.**  
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**Strictly Roots Restaurant**  
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THE INDYPENDENT

APRIL 7-20, 2004

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# GALLERY

## WRITING ON THE WALL

A selection of posters from *Clamor Magazine's Make Art, Not War*.  
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# REVIEWS

## CULTURE, POLITICS & CRITICISM

### ATTACK OF THE LIBERALS: AIR AMERICA TAKES OFF

The much-hyped “liberal” talk radio network Air America made its New York City debut March 31 on WLIB (1190 AM), promising to serve “the more than half of all Americans who are not currently listening to the existing talk radio stars and stations.” But while many liberals have pinned their hopes on the success of Air America, its impact on small left-wing media outlets is uncertain.

Already, Air America has displaced most of the Caribbean-American programming on WLIB, angering many New Yorkers. Likewise, how the station might affect WBAI-FM is an open question.

Billing itself as a new choice in a medium that has been dominated by conservatives, it intends to “bring a series of fresh new voices to America’s ears,” executive director Evan Cohen told reporters. “There are listeners out there who are begging for [an alternative] to today’s right-wing-oriented talk radio.”

Led by comedian Al Franken and boasting several programs similar to “The Daily Show,” Air America will attempt to attract an audience through political humor and satire.

Comedienne Janeane Garofalo will co-host a show called “The Majority Report” from 8 to 11 p.m.

Throughout the 1990s, as Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and Michael Savage dominated the radio dial, a number of grassroots media ventures in New York City filled a void left by the Democrats. Although under funded compared to Air



from the CAA denounced Air America and the Democratic Party as “a two-headed snake that is destroying Black radio” to the nearly 100 who attended. Law and CAA members contended that the Arbitron ratings system “deliberately impoverishes Black radio,” leaving them financially vulnerable to hostile takeovers. “We are asking every Black New Yorker to turn off Air America,” Law told the crowd. “Air America must restructure its on air line-up to include broadcasters known and respected by the national Black community as well as reorganize its sales and production staff.”

Law and CAA member Viola Plummer rejected fears that conservatives might use the changes at WLIB to undermine a Democratic radio network. “We didn’t make Air America come in here and dismiss us like they did,” said Law. “We shouldn’t be concerned about them, they should have been concerned about us. It’s not our job to protect their derriere. They should have thought harder about opening themselves to these kinds of attacks.”

#### Challenging WBAI?

Meanwhile, Air America’s impact on WBAI, for years New York’s only consistently left-wing radio station, remains to be seen. After nearly a decade of inner turmoil and a more recent cash crunch, the station is now facing a new contest for listeners from Air America.

For now, WBAI is striking a note of quiet confidence. “A little competition never hurt anyone,” station General Manager Don Rojas told *The Independent*. “We plan to continue with our progressive and radical programming focus, improve the quality of our content and deepen our station’s outreach

America, radio outlets such as WBAI-FM and Democracy Now! flourished, drawing hundreds of thousands of listeners. After years of having progressive listeners to themselves, these groups now face what one media activist wryly called “an 800-lb. radio gorilla in liberal clothes.”

#### Disputed Changes at WLIB

Nowhere has the impact of Air America been felt more strongly than at WLIB-AM, an idiosyncratic New York station that featured community news, cricket scores, and Caribbean music and news for more than 30 years. In early March, WLIB ownership announced that it was leasing the majority of its airtime to Air America, providing the network with a New York outlet. By mid-March, WLIB had fired many of its hosts and was playing automat-

ed Caribbean music while it prepared for the transition.

The changes prompted angry protests from some members of New York City’s radio community, including the Coalition of Artists and Activists (CAA), a group of African-American artists battling to preserve Black-owned media. Long-time WLIB listeners also voiced sadness. “WLIB was a voice for Caribbean music,” wrote a contributor to an online “Island Music” chat board. “We really have nothing to call our own... this whole deletion is a huge step backwards for the Caribbean community.”

“WLIB’s been around for years. I can remember listening to it every Saturday.”

At an energetic rally on Thursday, April 1 at Abyssinian Baptist Church, long-time African-American radio activist Bob Law and representatives

into multicultural and youth communities.”

Others are less sanguine. Patty Heffley, WBAI Local Station Board Secretary, expressed concern that Air America could attract New Yorkers dissatisfied with what she called “WBAI’s endlessly negative leftism.” “I’m hoping that the arrival of Air America will a wake up call to WBAI to examine what they might not doing,” she said. “We should be doing everything that WLIB is doing, only better.”

#### Listeners React

According to *New York Times* media critic Alessandra Stanley, Air America debut featured some tepid humor and a stumbling apology from guest Michael Moore for his support of Ralph Nader in 2000. Many listeners have also had mixed reactions to early broadcasts.

“I’d [suggest] that the IMC radio co-ops and even Democracy Now! begin closely monitoring the liberal talk network in order to begin debunking the lies they’ll doubtless be telling,” wrote one listener to [nyc.indymedia.org](http://nyc.indymedia.org).

Another listener told Indymedia that Air America had “the worst aspects of community radio production values, and smarmy AM radio ads... sometimes peppered with goofy Rage-Against-the-Machine-esque guitar loops.”

Others, however, took a more hopeful view. “Frankly, I want more choices,” one Air America listener wrote. “Sometimes I listen to WBAI, sometimes Public Radio (corporate sponsored), sometimes Howard Stern, sometimes the oldies station, and now I can listen to the liberal attack dogs.”

Regardless of its eventual commercial success or failure, Air America promises to not only have an immediate impact upon the New York media landscape, but one that will last for some time to come. With at least \$20 million in the bank and backing of the Democratic Party establishment, liberal talk radio may very well be here to stay.

— Chris Anderson

### COURTIERS FOR COMPETENCE

#### AGAINST ALL ENEMIES

By Richard Clarke  
Free Press, 2004

Richard Clarke’s book, *Against All Enemies*, has sparked considerable controversy for stating that the Bush administration fixated on invading Iraq without any evidence that Saddam Hussein had any connections to the 9/11 attacks.

“See if Saddam did this,” Clarke says Bush ordered him on the night of Sept. 12, 2001. Clarke, head of the federal Counterterrorism Security Group, protested that “we have looked several times for state sponsorship of al-Qaeda and not found any linkages to Iraq. Iran plays a little, as does Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, Yemen.”

The response: “Look into Iraq, Saddam,” the President said testily and left us,” leaving one official “with her mouth hanging open.”

How much of this is self-promotion and how much is true? Clarke’s account of the scenes at the White House on 9/11 is intensely dramatic, but was he as much at the center of things as he portrays himself? Like former Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill’s *The Price of Loyalty*, Clarke’s insid-

er status and militaristic past lends credibility to his criticisms of Bush. O’Neill was a right-wing aluminum executive, while Clarke was a longtime national-security bureaucrat apparently widely perceived as having a bug up his ass about “terrorism.” Both books paint a portrait of a White House out of touch with reality, one in which even blunt, brutal ruling-class self-interest is eclipsed by ideological fetishism.

Clarke lambastes Bush for pursuing the war in Afghanistan weakly, thus blowing a chance to catch Osama bin Laden, and spending tens of billions of dollars on the war in Iraq while failing to bolster domestic disaster response. According to *Against All Enemies*, the Bush administration largely ignored the growing threat of al-

Qaeda in 2001, instead concentrating on planning a war with Iraq and pushing “Star Wars” missile defense – the far right’s version of Elvis sightings. In April 2001, Clarke writes, Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, one of the prime advocates of the Iraq invasion, wondered why he was making a fuss about “this one man bin Laden.” Later, Clarke claims, Wolfowitz had the ambassador to Indonesia removed for “making too much noise about al-Qaeda, being paranoid.”

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, he says, appeared baffled when he first mentioned al-Qaeda to her. He says he repeatedly e-mailed Rice, his boss, in the spring of 2001 “that al-Qaeda was trying to kill Americans, to have hundreds of dead in the streets.” The government’s counterterrorism staff was on alert throughout the summer of 2001, he adds, and the CIA knew that two of the 9/11 hijackers were in the U.S. – but never told the FBI.

Yet Clarke does not question the motives of U.S. foreign policy, only the tactics. He believes that the 1970s restrictions on the CIA handcuffed the agency, and describes the Patriot Act as a necessary set of “reforms” whose only problem is that John Ashcroft made it sound fascistic. (“He can’t really be that slow, can he?” an aide wonders after meeting with the attorney general.) He sees the Cold War as an “existential struggle” between freedom and totalitarianism, but acknowledges that backing the mujahedeen in Afghanistan against the pro-Soviet regime there led to the creation of al-Qaeda.

Most of the book focuses on the evolution of “terrorism” after the Afghan war of the 1980s. The United States almost went to war with Iran in 1996, he says, after the bombing of the Air Force’s Khobar Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia, and narrowly averted al-Qaeda attacks planned for Dec. 31, 1999. In general, he contends, Bill Clinton was more active against terrorism than Bush, stayed up until the wee hours

plowing through staff memos, while Bush “is not a big reader” and is in bed by 10. Bush isn’t as dumb as he seems, Clarke observes, but wants “the simple solution, the bumper-sticker description of the problem.”

But for all his obsession with fighting “terrorism,” Clarke never exactly defines what it is. Is it an ideology or a tactic? If the “war on terrorism” is against an ideology, it would be more accurate to say it is against “Islamic fundamentalism.” On the other hand, that could easily come off as anti-Muslim, encompass Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (Clarke says the United States will have to confront both those nations to win the war), and perhaps call up comparisons with our homegrown fundamentalists, whose position on homosexuality is only a few bricks different from the Taliban’s.

If “terrorism” is a tactic, killing civilians at random to achieve a political end, then was Timothy McVeigh a “terrorist”? In fact, by this definition, every nation that has fought a war in the last 100 years would qualify.

As defined by the Bush administration and common discourse, “terrorism” signifies a nebulous hybrid of ideology and tactics. Clarke tends to buy into this. There is some truth to it, as Arab and Islamicist guerrilla groups have attacked random civilians far more than the Viet Cong or the Salvadoran FMLN did, but in practice it’s a Newspeak word. In the eyes of most Americans, it means “the evil ragheads,” “the camel-humping infidels,” “the dark side,” as if Osama bin Laden were Darth Vader and Saddam Hussein Satan’s consort. Bush sold the war in Iraq largely on the strength of this construction, pitching it to Americans seemingly ignorant enough to identify “Mumia Abu-Jamal” or “Kareem Abdul-Jabbar” as 9/11 hijackers.

If the “war on terror” is the central conflict of our time, the world is an incredibly depressing place. The two sides are the murderous theocratic fanaticism of al-Qaeda and the Mammonite Christian fanaticism of the Bush regime, in

which every corner of the world must be subjugated to their money-god. Clarke has pointed out that Bush is impractically demented, even on his own Machiavellian terms.

“What was unique about George Bush’s reaction to terrorism was his selection as an object lesson for potential sponsors of state terrorism, not a country that had been engaging in anti-U.S. terrorism but one that had not been, Iraq,” he concludes. “Far from addressing the popular appeal of the enemy that attacked us, Bush handed that enemy precisely what it wanted and needed.... Nothing America could have done would have provided al-Qaeda and its new generation of cloned groups with a better recruitment device than our unprovoked invasion of an oil-rich Arab country.”

—STEVE WISHNIA

### COUPMAKING FOR DUMMIES

#### ALL THE SHAH’S MEN

By Stephen Kinzer  
John Wiley & Sons, 2003

Stephen Kinzer’s *All the Shah’s Men*, brings to light the story of the 1953 CIA-backed coup that deposed Mohammed Mossadegh, the Prime Minister of Iran, and replaced him with the hated Shah. Kinzer has been a foreign correspondent in more than 50 nations, and is co-author of *Bitter Fruit*, an account of the removal of the Arbenz government in Guatemala the following year.

*All the Shah’s Men* is a detailed account of the coup, however, Kinzer treads lightly on the issue of the “blank check” that Eisenhower gave the CIA to overthrow Mossadegh. But ultimately, Kinzer’s conclusion that the removal of popularly elected leaders can lead to the rise of fundamentalist anti-American regimes is a timely message in this era of “regime change.”

— Christian Roselund

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